2. THE FORMATION OF THE PARTY: HITLER'S RETROSPECT

I have here translated some retrospective passages from speeches after the National Socialist assumption of power in 1933. They illustrate Hitler's treatment of a theme which constantly recurs in the speeches.

In his election speech to the Sudeten Germans, delivered at Reichenberg on 2 December 1938, Hitler said: "During these days of collapse I was an inmate of a small military hospital in North Germany. I had, of course, before this interested myself in political problems; but it was during this time that it first became clear to me that, failing a complete change in certain of Germany's ideas, the prophecies of our enemies were bound eventually to come true."

"Our collapse was not a military collapse, as people liked to make out for reasons of party politics, neither was it a political collapse: it was, fundamentally, a general collapse of society. The German people found itself in the midst of a process of dissolution. Bismarck once made out of the tribes of Germany the German Reich, but the process of the coming to be of the German peoples did not, unfortunately, keep pace with the founding of the Reich. On the contrary, at the very time when the Reich seemed eternally to be gaining strength, when it was enlarging itself and becoming powerful and rich in a material sense, internally the body of the people *(Volkskörper)* as such began to dissolve."

"I do not refer to all the numerous parties which began at this time to breed dissension in Germany, nor to the Confessional controversy nor to the separatist tendencies which perhaps existed in one or another of our States. I mean rather that general dissolution of society which expressed itself in the two great concepts of 'Bourgeoisie" and 'Proletariat'. On one side stood a world which declared itself *bourgeois* and claimed to represent the idea of the nation — and on the other side a world which called itself Marxist, and laid claim to the Socialist idea."

"Which camp would be victorious over the other it was impossible to foresee, yet this, my fellow-countrymen, was the fateful question for the whole future of Germany! For two worlds cannot exist in one people. Either one must overcome the other, or both must be ruined. Even before the War both parties had become sterile, and each had lost the power to make a really serious onslaught on the other. One cannot maintain for the space of sixty years an outlook on the world *(Weltanschauung)* which claims to be universal if one does not in this period obtain a victory which is also universal. That which after twenty or thirty years has failed to carry the day loses the strength for victory. Thus Marxism had grown old in the form of Social Democracy as we used to know it, while the *bourgeois* world had become stiff and set in the party formations, first of the Conservatives, and later of the Liberals."

"Anyone who still wished to believe in a resurrection of Germany was forced to recognize that the German nation could be saved only by a gigantic effort. A completely new path had to be trodden. Its aim was to raise up a new German community of the people, and thereby to restore a true homogeneous body of the people. For fifteen years I have trodden this path believing it to be right, trusting in the natural instinct, in the strength and the inner worth of my people. In these years I have often caused bitter pain to many, since I had to take from them all that which, perhaps, they had hitherto regarded as right, and sometimes even as sacred. During this time I had to ride roughshod over a thousand cherished traditions and destroy them. I had to make all individual symbols give way before one new symbol, which was destined to become henceforth the symbol of the Reich — the symbol of the German nation! Higher than Prussia, higher than Bavaria, higher than Saxony or Württemberg was to stand always and eternally the thought of Germany, the German Reich! But these had their banners, their standards, and their flags. I must then wage war on these banners and standards, regardless of the fact that they had once helped to mold the history of Germany. I must reject the princely houses and all that gathered round them, regardless of what they had once achieved or perhaps hoped yet to achieve. It was quite clear: the nation must tread a new path, and everything that opposed its progress must be brushed aside, without regard for the feelings of the individual."

"And there were the Confessions! They thought that they could still carry on their old controversies and disputes. Quarrelsome priests, quarrelsome bishops had to be taught that the time had gone by in which religion could be turned into a mere political wrestling-ground. We had to put them back into their proper place, remembering always that nothing must rend the German nation asunder — nothing at all!"

"Still more difficult was it to uproot all those trackless and often indefinable feelings and emotions which in human society spring from pride of descent or class consciousness. Yet all these social and personal traditions had to go and the common element in the people's life' had to be brought into the foreground."

"I had by that time, in 1918, discovered two ideals which, it seemed, could unquestionably inspire men and bring them under their spell—the Socialist and the National ideals. For these two ideals men at that time were ready if necessary even to die. If an ideal can so inspire a man that he is prepared to give his life for it, then it holds within it a mighty and a kindling force. And I was then resolved to take these two ideals and to fuse them into a single whole. If I succeeded in that, then the nation might be saved. If not, the nation would more and more tear itself to pieces, and would finally go down In impotence and ruin."

"Naturally my opponents said at once: 'Such a union is impossible. Nationalism and Socialism are ideas which can never be fused!' I held the view at that time that those who were interested in keeping these ideas apart were not the best qualified to consider whether such a union was possible, since they actually got their living from maintaining this separation. Who, then, was specially qualified to examine these questions? Those party leaders who during the whole of the World War stayed at home, sat bunched up in Parliament or roamed about in foreign countries? If anyone was qualified to investigate the German problem, it was the German front-line soldier! As for the other party leaders, they have made speeches for ten years; at the time when every decent German did his duty, they sat chattering at home. They did us no service by it. The result of their activities was the downfall of the nation, the ruin of its economic position, and the destruction of all the foundations of social life. At first, for four and a half years, I spoke no word, but like millions of other Germans I simply did my duty. Then, when the War came to an end, and I returned home from the military hospital, as spokesman and representative of the millions out there I undertook this examination. It was only natural that I started from other ideas than those of the parliamentarians and party politicians who preceded me in Germany. I saw before me no *bourgeoisie,* no proletariat, no Catholics, no Protestants, not Bavarians, Saxons, or Prussians, I saw before me German fellow-countrymen, who belonged together by birth, blood, and destiny, and who had been set at variance by false education and by false teaching. The task of the future must now be to bring them together again. This question, as the years went on, was not raised theoretically; it was solved practically through the educational work of the National Socialist Party. Slowly there vanish from the field of vision of our youth today all the ridiculous prejudices from which many of their fathers, it may be, still suffer. And if one says to me, 'Yes, but there are still some prejudices which survive', my answer is that National Socialism is not at the end of its days, but only at the beginning. If we wait one, two, three, five, or ten generations, there will be nothing left of these fossils of the present time. Then there will stand forth a people strong and healthy, unbroken, united and unconquerable. It will form its life in common, and vindicate its rights against all who seek to take them away.... The Party, once so ridiculed, has not only won the control of Germany by legal methods; it has already realized in itself that community of the people which was the far vision of its final goal!"!

NATIONAL-SOCIALISM

In an article published in the "Sunday Express" 28 *September 1930 Hitler gives his definition of "Nationalist":*

"One to whom duty to country or community comes before self-interest; in other words, 'One for all'. but with justice for the one where interests clash." *He proceeded:*

" 'Socialist' I define from the word 'social' meaning in the main 'social equity'. A Socialist is one who serves the common good without giving up his individuality or personality or the product of his personal efficiency."

"Our adopted term 'Socialist' has nothing to do with Marxian Socialism. Marxism is anti-property; true Socialism is not. Marxism places no value on the individual, or individual effort, or efficiency; true Socialism values the individual and encourages him in individual efficiency, at the same time holding that his interests as an individual must be in consonance with those of the community."

"All great inventions, discoveries, achievements were first the product of an individual brain."

"It is charged against me that I am against property, that I am an atheist."

"Both charges are false.")

In a speech to the "Old Guard" of the Party at the Anniversary of the Foundation of the Party (24 *February* 1934) *Hitler said that* in the early days many came to him and said, "If only you had not adopted the word 'National' we would go with you", and the others said, "If you were not Socialistic we would join you". We adopted both words precisely in order to prevent these folk from going with us. We did not want them, these Apostles of the Past. We were convinced that we could make our Movement great only if we succeeded in the future in keeping at a distance the ferments of disintegration derived from the past. In uniting Nationalism and Socialism we have scared away from us both the *bourgeois* Nationalists and the international Marxists to find immeasurable new sources of strength in the inexhaustible well-spring of our own people *(Volkstums).*

Hitler in his speech at Hamburg on I7 August 1934 said that after the close of the War two views struggled for mastery within the German people: "Millions lived in a world of Socialist conceptions which they might not be able to define in detail but which as a whole appeared to them as fixed and necessary. Over against this world of Socialist conceptions there stood the national idea. Here, too, definitions might vary greatly, but here, too, the word 'National' embraced a sum of ideas which led up to a general conception for which millions were ready to give their all. Now the decisive factor was that the qualified representatives of these two views — or those who regarded themselves as such — maintained on principle that between these two worlds not only was any connecting link lacking but that they must of necessity stand opposed to each other in deadly enmity."

"The Socialist world was mainly inhabited by those who worked with the hand, the national world by those who worked with the brainy If these divided worlds were not to lead to the annihilation of Germany, one of the two, within a not too distant future, must emerge as victor, for in the long ran a nation cannot survive when its brain workers see in the organized workers with the hands their deadly enemy and vice versa. The worst therefore which threatened us was thus not a victory of Marxism over *bourgeois* nationalism, but the worst fear was that this state of things should harden into permanency — that the German people should slowly but finally split into two self-sufficing bodies with different outlooks upon the world. The religious division within our people can teach us that such a development is possible."'

"This, my fellow-countrymen, was the situation which met me and millions of others at the end of the War. That was the picture that the homeland offered to the returning soldiers and which was but more clearly marked in the following months and years. In such circumstances it was not difficult to foresee the future of the German nation. The misfortune of our former religious ruin now, some centuries later, found its continuation. Once more a development which promised success for our people gave place to a mad conflict of theories which could never profit either the *bourgeois* citizen or the worker. Only a tiny clique of international destroyers which favors strife in the world because it lives on strife could welcome such madness.... This struggle was bound at last to end in Bolshevist chaos. What that would mean for Germany perhaps even today not everyone can completely realize. When I recognized this I could not at that time enter into a world of political parties which I was convinced could lead the nation only to its ruin. These were the considerations which determined my outlook":

"If the Nationalism of our *bourgeois* world and the Socialism of our Marxists could never unite; if, in consequence, the mass of the intelligentsia finally lost all relation to the mass of the people; and if lastly the nation, i.e. the German people, fell in consequence into complete disintegration and weakness, and therefore into economic annihilation, then both these theories could have no value for this people. For theories do not exist to annihilate peoples, but to make them happier. Let the economic laws of our life be what they may, ideas and principles which lead to the destruction of economic life are, as laws of life, useless. Parties which represent such ideas one cannot reform: one must destroy them. for, after all, it is better for a few dozen Marxist and *bourgeois* parties to be ruined rather than for a people to suffer that fate. For these parties have maintained their miserable existence at the cost of the nation only for a few decades, but the people has millennia behind it and through its sacrifices and its struggles in the past has a claim to live for millennia in the future."

"Therefore in my eyes there was no sense in joining one of these parties in order perhaps to give them a longer lease of life; political life had some meaning only if one was successful in destroying them."

"Thus, my fellow-countrymen, when I entered political life it was with the burning vow in my heart that I would root out from Germany this world of the political parties — that I would set in its place a community of the German people."

"And from the first day I saw clearly that this goal could not be reached in weeks or months or even in a few years. I realized the immense work which such a decision entails. Just as surely as an examination of the terms Socialism and Nationalism leads to a single definition, so certain is it that the realization of such a definition means unending work in educating the people. One can easily state, so far as the mere understanding of the statement goes, that the highest forth of Nationalism finds its expression only in an unconditional devotion of the individual to the people. It will never be denied that the purest form of Socialism means the conscious elevation of the claims of the people, its life and its interests above the interests and the life of the individual. But it is a task of immeasurable difficulty to translate the recognition of these facts from the world of ideals, from the sphere of abstract thought, into the realm of hard actualities."

"Here one was met by a world of prejudices. Descent, education, culture, profession, income, poverty, and wealth have all raised barriers which are apparently insurmountable. They need not be consciously hostile, these folk, and yet they cannot find the way to each other. The course of a long life which now lies behind them has so filled them with traditions that they seem to themselves — as innocent victims perhaps — to be no longer able to recognize that greater common element which should unite them. If in spite of all this I then attacked this great task with faith in my heart, I, an unknown German soldier of the World War, that was precisely because of the stupendous impression produced upon me by that — the greatest of all experiences. For that individual interests — the interests of one's own ego — could be subordinated to the common interest — that the great, heroic struggle of our people had demonstrated in an overwhelming fashion. Millions upon millions then protected the life and the liberty of a people which thus became to them as a whole of more value than the individual life. But if it is possible for millions of men in war-time so to devote themselves to a community as to sacrifice life itself, then it must be possible to maintain in peace-time also this ideal of the community. For the men who were living in 1918, 1919, and 1920, who are living with us today, are not different men from those who did their duty in the years 1914 to 1918. It is only the leadership which has changed."

Hitler went on to describe the growth of the Movement and its success: "This kingdom of Heaven could not be conquered by cowards or by the half-hearted. For this struggle only such men and women are fitted who are ready to devote themselves to it to the point of the sacrifice of themselves." Such a Mass-Movement can be effective only if it works with great and simple concepts *(Gesichtspunkten).* "The creed of such a Movement can embrace only a few lapidary principles." "The decisive factor is that the right principles of our struggle should be represented with a spirit that nothing can turn aside, with resolution and with courage." "All those who, to a less degree in Germany than in the rest of the world, are revolted by the harshness *(Härte)* of the National Socialist revolution I would ask to consider that the National Socialist Movement — solely during the period of its legal fight for power — had to lament nearly 400 dead and more than 43,000 wounded. It was here again only the will to maintain the community of the German people which gave us all after the victory self-mastery and restraint. It was not our wish to shed blood, we wished to wreak no vengeance, but we now wished more earnestly than ever before to capture and win men for the new community."

"We know that for many the way to this new conception is difficult. We know, too, that the Movement in proclaiming its ideals must use earthly agents who themselves may all too easily give way to human shortcomings. But I would ask everyone to consider that the building up of an army demands two or three hundred years, that religions spend two thousand and more years on the education of their priesthood, and yet one can never quite overcome human weakness. Who will dare to pass a judgment upon a Movement which fifteen years ago was begun with nothing and from nothing, and today has to lead a whole nation? I know that it will take many decades before the leadership has at its command personalities even approximately corresponding to the greatness of our task.... Fate gave me the men and as they were I had to make use of them. That which is bad amongst us cannot be better, but what can be bettered will be replaced by better material. But always I would remind the nation of the greatness of the tasks which were set us and the shortness of the time we had for their consideration."!

In his wireless message to Danzig on 27 May 1933 Hitler once more described the conditions in which the National Socialist Party arose; he said that the latent hostility between the proletariat and the *bourgeoisie* must have led in the course of decades to the complete dissolution of the body of the German people. Both Marxism and the *bourgeois* parties were internationally minded: in political life one is responsible for what in fact results from one's action: the *bourgeois* parties never grew out of a narrow point of view based on class: they never succeeded in extending the term "national" to include the whole nation. The hopelessness of their political work was shown by the

fact that through long decades they continually lost ground amongst the masses of the German people. They had good material to work upon: "the German workman, like the German peasant, was pious, honest, industrious, and loyal: the task of the *bourgeois* democracy was thus to win the soul of these masses, to educate them and to build them as a valuable factor into their democratic State." In that task they failed. Even before the War the Social Democrats were the strongest party and every new election only strengthened their position. "Thus the Marxist assailant is not alone responsible for the German collapse; the *bourgeois* defender is just as responsible. The *bourgeois* parties had received a valuable treasure and they could not keep it." The worst feature of all, however, was that both *bourgeois* nationalism and international Marxism became more and more sterile. Communism with its youthful vigor renewed the Marxist party.

"In 1918 a resurrection of the German nation was conceivable only if one of the contending parties had conquered the other and had thus given to the German people a unity of spirit and will." "Any method which might lead to this end was then justified. The opinion that this struggle might be waged only with weapons of the spirit — or with what then in the *bourgeois* camp was called a weapon of the spirit — was ludicrous. History is perhaps interested in methods, but she puts to the test success alone and not methods. Inasmuch as the old *bourgeois* and the Marxist worlds, both alike, remained stuck in the contemplation of methods, they had lost the strength for action." Therefore the question of the resurrection of the German nation became the question of how to remove both parties. I have the right to speak and form a judgment on these problems because I, more clearly than others, discerned the causes of this unavoidable downfall and foresaw the way to master the crisis. "I saw that the old parties must go: of course it would have been easier to have joined one of these existing formations, but any attempt to remove the distress of Germany through these parties was bound to fail. They were too heavily burdened with the tradition of their- false thought-world." The course of events has proved that I was right. Their failure to raise the German people could be explained only on two grounds: either the leaders of the old parties did not desire such a rise or they were in their essential character powerless to effect it. Both are true: the leaders of the old parties did not want it, because they were not aiming at the destruction of Marxism: they were choked by their eternal cowardly compromises: and they could not effect it, because they lacked the force of an aggressive outlook on the world which could have dominated their action In 1918 and 1919 the two ideals of Nationalism and Socialism stood opposed to each other: they declared themselves to be mutually incompatible and therefore enemies for all time. Could one of them emerge victorious?

"I then held the view that one must define afresh the two conceptions: one must unite the two apparent extremes and thus awake an unparalleled strength Oh behalf of the nation, of the whole people." . . . "It seemed to me possible to approach these two ideals without preconceptions, to scrutinize them from a higher standpoint and this scrutiny led me to the happy recognition that fundamentally both conceptions were one and the same. Thus a new idea for the people *(Volksgedanke)* was born: through the intimate marriage of Nationalism and Socialism there was developed a force at which formerly the old parties scoffed, but before which today they have surrendered." Thus were created forces which have led to the formation in our people of a new political will.

"Within Germany the frontiers of tribes and States, of parties, classes, and professions have been broken down; in the same way through the power of this idea working in the hearts of the people will the external frontiers dividing the German people be broken down. Just as former Governments in Germany by means of their external force could not break the strength of soul, the inner union of National Socialists, so will every external force fail in breaking that unity."